114 down on the field, from the reports of excellent informants. They have been obtained in San Andres and Yuto, on the Pilcomayo river, and in San Patricio, on the river Bermejo.

Birth and Infancy

842 754 The child is produced by the father's seed, which germinates, as does a plant, within the mother. Sterility is always considered by the Matacos to be the mother's fault. They explain it as being an accident brought about by some witch doctor who is using magic to prevent the sperm from getting into the woman's body. It is said that some women go to a witch doctor with the express purpose of having conception prevented. The witch doctors can, furthermore, break the enchantment, although this s considered an extraordinarily difficult thing to do.

843 A pregnant woman eats moderately so that the child will not grow too large and cause difficulty at birth. The mystical bonds between father and child find their expression in a great number of "tabus." Thus, just prior to the child's birth, the father must abstain from all work that might cause the child to be deformed. He is prohibited, in particular, from using any instrument with a cutting edge (axes, knives, hoes) in order to avoid the child's coming into the world with wounds, a harelip, for instance. The father is careful not to wear sandals or shoes, in order to ensure that the infant not have one foot larger than the other. If the father should put on a hat, the upper part of [9] the child's head will be absolutely flat. The mission [212] Indians go so far as to keep from writing, fearful that the offspring be born with a wrinkled face.

If a father to be kills only male animals on the hunt, it is a sign that the child about to be born will be a male.

Precautions of various kinds are likewise taken by the women before the child's birth. They avoid girding themselves too tightly about the waist with a belt and sleeping in a position which might lead to a difficult birth. Some women make use of drugs to make sure that no accident will overtake them. To this end they take a powder made